

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please replace paragraph 17 with the following paragraph:

[0001] An apparatus for cutting segments from a strip of multi-layered elastomeric material containing reinforcing cords, the cords being substantially parallel and more or less oriented in the direction of the cut path, is described by the following features. A cutting element for cutting the strip to form cut ends has a cutting edge oriented to cut along a line 3, the line 3 being tangent to one or more cords and inclined at a desired skive angle  $\alpha$ , and a means for supporting the strip along the cutting path, the means for supporting the strip having a first surface oriented at an angle  $\theta_1$  less than the skive angle  $\alpha$ , and a second surface oriented at an angle  $\theta_2$  greater than or equal to the skive angle  $\alpha$ , and a means for restraining the strip against the means for supporting, the means for restraining the strip preferably lying ahead of the cutting element, and being moveable. The apparatus further has a means for moving both the cutting element and the means for restraining during the cutting of the strip. In one embodiment, the apparatus has the cutting element having a cutting edge inclined at an acute angle  $\beta$  relative to the width of the strip. The cutting edge when oriented as described initiates cutting on the surface furthest away from the means for supporting the strip. The skive angle  $\alpha$  is normally set about  $10^\circ$  or less forming a cut path adjacent to one or more cords of the strip being cut. While the means or supporting the strip has two surfaces inclined at angles  $\theta_1$ , and  $\theta_2$  respectively,  $\theta_1$  is preferably set about  $2^\circ$  less than the skive angle  $\alpha$ , the angle  $\theta_2$  is about  $2^\circ$  more than the skive angle  $\alpha$ . In one embodiment the skive angle  $\alpha$  is set to about  $8^\circ$ .